



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

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# News Release

## **HOMELAND SECURITY DRUG SEIZURES IN MICHIGAN**

*Local drug seizures had record increases in FY05*

DETROIT — Fiscal Year 2005 (FY 05), which ended Sept. 30, has become a record year for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) drug seizures here, announced U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy, Eastern District of Michigan; U.S. Immigration and Customs (ICE) Special Agent-in-Charge Brian M. Moskowitz; and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Acting Director of Field Operations H. Denise Crawford.

Since ICE was created in March 2003, ICE Detroit drug investigations have prosecuted or convicted 45 individuals for drug-related crimes. The amount of high-grade marijuana seized, commonly referred to as "B.C. Bud," increased during FY 05 to more than 19,000 lbs., representing a street value of \$57 million (U.S). The results show a 325-percent increase over the previous year when 6,200 lbs. of marijuana was seized.

ICE "ecstasy" investigations and seizures increased 14 percent in FY 05. From October 2001 through October 2004, ICE special agents made an average of 43 ecstasy seizures each year, with a cumulative total of 160,000 ecstasy tablets. FY 05 ecstasy seizures increased to 49, and totaled more than 400,000 ecstasy pills with an \$8 million (U.S) street value. The amount of ecstasy pills seized in FY 05 represents a 250 percent increase over the total of the previous three fiscal years.

ICE continues to work collaboratively with its Homeland Security and local law enforcement partners to ensure these and other illegal drugs stay out of our communities.

"I commend the efforts of the officers of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) as well as the special agents of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for their notable efforts to significantly reduce the supply of drugs in the Eastern District of Michigan. The record number of drug seizures for this year would not have been possible without the outstanding leadership of both ICE and CPB. The United States Attorney's Office will continue to work aggressively with the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that this trend continues," said U.S. Attorney Stephen J. Murphy.

"There are fewer drug smugglers operating on the Michigan-Ontario border as a result of the interdiction efforts of Customs and Border Protection Officers and the investigative work of ICE special agents," said Brian M. Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge of the ICE Detroit Office. "This work collectively represents significant seizures of illicit drugs both in terms of quantity and by the nature of the attempted methods of smuggling." Moskowitz heads the ICE Office of Investigations, which includes the states of Michigan and Ohio.

"We have the mission of not only keeping out terrorists, but also drugs," said H. Denise Crawford, acting director of field operations for Customs and Border Protection in Michigan. "These seizures are a direct result of our continued presence and vigilance in the performance of our DHS mission."

ICE has additionally applied its financial expertise to these investigations to target the illicit proceeds of these criminal organizations. Criminal organizations are seeing their illegal profits and financial infrastructures depleted by ICE investigations. Following are three prominent cases from FY 05:

- A federal jury found Surinder Pal Singh, 31, guilty of contraband smuggling after a four-day trial in February 2005. Singh was arrested in November 2004 at the Blue Water Bridge after entering the U.S. from Canada driving a tractor-trailer containing garbage. During an inspection of the trailer's contents, CBP officers and ICE special agents discovered numerous duffel bags filled with marijuana concealed in the trash. They seized more than 840 kilograms (1850 lbs.) of high-grade marijuana with an estimated street value of \$5.5 million.
- Chanh Chan Lao, 36, a Canadian citizen born in Vietnam, was found guilty in November 2004 by a federal jury after a six-day trial for violating 14 counts of federal law. Lao was apprehended in November 2003 attempting to smuggle more than one million ecstasy pills, aka MDMA, equal to 70 kilograms (154 lbs.), into the United States. Lao was also found guilty of being the leader of a drug organization.
- Kevin Do, 31, pleaded guilty in April 2005 to one count of importing drugs and one count of possessing drugs with the intent to distribute. Do was apprehended in December 2004 while smuggling 15,169 ecstasy pills, aka. MDMA into the United States through the Windsor Tunnel. U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers and ICE special agents discovered the ecstasy tablets in the spare tire attached to the undercarriage of a 2002 Ford Explorer. The estimated street value of the drugs exceeds \$250,000.

# ICE #

*U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.*